

SILENT VIGIL FOR PEACE

In front of Borough Hall Monday nights from 5:30-6:30. This vigil is silent and peaceful in the Quaker tradition. Feel free to join us. Bring a candle and a peaceful sign if you wish.

The Origins of Mother's Day

"From the bosom of the devastated earth a voice goes up with our own: it says 'Disarm. Disarm.'"

That's an excerpt from the document that launched Mother's Day in America. Its origins were not with breakfast in bed or a corsage or a greeting card; it began as a political cry for peace.

Known as "The Mother's Day Proclamation for Peace," it was written in 1870 by Julia Ward Howe, the mother of six. Howe had recently walked the battlefields of the Civil War with her husband and with Abraham Lincoln. She had just written "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." But now, as the Franco Prussian War was beginning, she felt that she could not bear any more violence. She called for a congress of women to gather immediately to promote "PEACE: A Mother's Day for Peace." Julia Ward Howe held a standing room only meeting in Boston the day that she read that proclamation.

About that same time, there was Anna Jarvis, who organized "A Mother's Friendship Day" in which mothers from both North and South whose sons had died in the Civil War came, dressed in gray or blue, held hands together and sang. Anna Jarvis's daughter -- who shared her name -- organized what is now considered to be the first U.S. Mother's Day on May 10, 1908. It was a church service dedicated to mothers, recognizing the unappreciated work that mothers do, and calling for peace in the home and in the world. Andrews Methodist Church, in Grafton, W. Va., is considered the Mother Church of Mother's Day. The next year Mother's Day was celebrated in 45 states.

President Woodrow Wilson got into the act on May 9, 1914, officially naming the second Sunday in May "Mother's Day," and redefining its purpose in a non-political way. His declaration included flowery language about the important role mothers play in the home and in society. But Wilson said nothing about a mother's role in promoting peace in the world.

Long before all of this, Mother's Day had origins in ancient Greece, with Rhea, mother of the Gods. We have only sketchy details of springtime rituals celebrating her, but we know there was festive food and dancing.

In the 1600s, England celebrated a day called "Mothering Sunday." Servants lived far from their own homes, but on Mothering Sunday they headed home, usually with a "mothering cake" to share with their own mothers.

Here in the United States, as the day became commercialized, founder Anna Jarvis spent much of her time trying to discourage people from buying greeting cards and flowers for mom. At the end of her life she said she was sorry she had ever gotten "Mother's Day" started, so desperate was she for a return to the peace message of her holiday.
Here's the complete text of her **"Mother's Day Proclamation for Peace"**:

"Arise, then, women of this day!

Arise all women who have hearts! Whether your baptism be that of water or of tears!

Say firmly:

We will not have questions decided by irrelevant agencies, Our husbands shall not come to us reeking with carnage, for caresses and applause.

Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn all that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy and patience.

We women of one country will be too tender of those of another country to allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs.

From the bosom of the devastated earth a voice goes up with our own.

It says, 'Disarm, Disarm!'

The sword of murder is not the balance of justice! Blood does not wipe out dishonor nor violence indicate possession.

As men have often forsaken the plow and the anvil at the summons of war, let women now leave all that may be left of home for a great and earnest day of counsel.

Let them meet first, as women, to bewail and commemorate the dead. Let them then solemnly take counsel with each other as to the means whereby the great human family can live in peace, each bearing after their own time the sacred impress, not of Caesar, but of God.

In the name of womanhood and of humanity, I earnestly ask that a general congress of women without limit of nationality may be appointed and held at some place deemed most convenient and at the earliest period consistent with its objects, to promote the alliance of the different nationalities, the amicable settlement of international questions, the great and general interests of peace."

Written by Nanci Olesen of TomPaine.com

What's Happening This Week?

This Week Congress will be considering the annual military ("defense") authorization bill. Tucked deep within the bill are two dangerous provisions. One would increase funding for a new bunker buster nuclear weapon, called the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator (RNEP). The other would repeal a 1993 law, called the Spratt-Furse provision, that bans low-yield nuclear weapons, known as "mini-nukes."

These two provisions could put international efforts to halt the spread of nuclear weapons at risk. It is virtually impossible to convince some nations to abstain from developing nuclear weapons while the U.S. maintains a huge nuclear arsenal and is developing new nuclear weapons of its own.

Congress must act now to help stop the spread of the most dangerous weapons in history by blocking funding for the RNEP and preserving the Spratt-Furse provision in current law. The military authorization bill could come to the floors of the Senate and House as early as May 19th.

Please contact your representative and senators. Urge them to oppose any effort to repeal the Spratt-Furse provision banning mini-nukes and to block funding to develop the RNEP. Developing new nuclear weapons will send the wrong signal to the rest of the world about nuclear proliferation, and, in the long run, will undermine U.S. security.

HISTORY

Since the end of the Cold War, some civilian military planners and nuclear scientists have argued for creating a new class of earth-penetrating nuclear weapons. These weapons are sometimes referred to as "bunker busters" because they would be designed to burrow into the ground to destroy underground military facilities that are protected by 100 to 300 feet of concrete or rock. The Energy Department's budget request includes \$15 million to continue a study on the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator (RNEP). The RNEP would be an existing nuclear weapon, redesigned for use against underground bunkers. It would have a yield of over 100 kilotons, at least seven times the size of the Hiroshima bomb.

RNEP proponents claim that, because the weapon penetrates the earth before detonating, it would be a "clean" nuclear weapon. In reality, this would be an extremely deadly weapon. If detonated in an urban setting, tens of thousands of people could receive a fatal dose of radiation within the first 24 hours. More would be killed or injured by the extreme pressures of the blast and thermal injuries arising from the heat of the explosion. Still more casualties would result from the resulting fires and the collapse of buildings from the seismic shock that the explosion would produce.

Nuclear weapons proponents are also continuing to urge the development of a low-yield (approximately five kiloton) weapon, termed a "mini-nuke," which might be used against a buried bunker or on the battlefield. Thus far, development of such a weapon has been blocked by a 1993 provision in the defense authorization bill, drafted by Rep. Spratt (SC) and former Rep. Furse (OR). The Spratt-Furse amendment banned research and development of nuclear weapons with yields below five kilotons. This ban represents a significant success in arms control. Neither the U.S. nor any other country has developed mini-nukes since then. However, this ban is now in jeopardy.

Reportedly, the driving force behind developing new nuclear weapons is not coming from military commanders. The military has other conventional weapons that are equally effective, but that do not have the problems associated with nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons would pose significant dangers to U.S. military personnel operating in the battlefield environment, and lower the threshold for nuclear war. Overall, U.S. military leaders have concluded that using nuclear weapons is imprudent and unnecessary.

This initiative will further weaken already struggling international efforts to halt nuclear proliferation. U.S. credibility with the international community will erode further if it seeks to upgrade U.S. nuclear weapons while demanding that Syria, Iraq, Iran, and North Korea disarm. Sen. Reed (RI), a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, recently stated, "It is extraordinarily difficult, if not impossible, to urge other nations to forswear the development and use of nuclear weapons if we are so routinely talking about the development and use of nuclear weapons." Dr. Mohamed El Baradei, director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, recently said that, instead of developing new nuclear weapons, the U.S. should send a message to potential proliferators that, "Even though we have nuclear weapons, we are moving to get rid of them. We are going to develop a system of security that does not depend on nuclear weapons because that's the way we want the world to move."

The Bush Administration is leading the world down the wrong path. Instead of adhering to our obligations under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) by reducing reliance on the most horrific weapons ever created and working for global disarmament, the Administration is seeking new uses for nuclear weapons. Adopting such a nuclear posture is a step backward, and a virtual invitation for other nations to opt out of their NPT obligations as well.

(text directly taken from http://www.fcni.org/act_lam_current/actnow_lam_index.htm) American Friends Service Committee